

Denise Sherwood

Submitted April 29, 2020

By email (wdsherwood@yahoo.com)

Hi,

I'm a RN who works in Newark at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. I posted this on face book after coming home from a tough shift. Please let me know that you received.

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As many of you know 5 years ago I had given up on Nursing frustrated with the "business" that healthcare had become. This past November I returned to Nursing and now find myself working on the frontline of this horrific pandemic.

I believe things happen for a reason and am glad to have this opportunity to serve. I say "serve", as to me, this feels like a war zone. (I have never been in the service or a war so I used that term loosely and respectfully). The hospital has a "command" center, they told me I was "redeployed", there are vent and cpr "triage" protocols in place should these critical ethical decisions need to be made and the hospital has completely transformed itself and is delivering care through the POD centered model.

I've worked in the acute care hospital setting for almost 40 years, and believe me, I have never seen anything like this. Our patients are all very ill, very helpless and very much isolated and alone.

Last night while at work our phones started pinging with multiple alerts via text and email, including an automated call from the "command center". They were alerting us that our N95 respirators were now to be reused and sterilized between shifts.

Something as simple as having my own fresh N95 each day made me feel safe. Now this one little change got us talking about how bad it really is and how bad it's going to get.

I was blessed that my first task yesterday was to discharge a patient to his family. It's a wonderful thing that I've only been able to do one other time. Employees know some one made it, people clap, you and the patient are stopped in the halls, we know we saved someone! Sadly, I returned to the unit only to find another patient being intubated. It just doesn't stop. As soon as one patient leaves another patient is admitted.

Yet, through all this, each time I climb the steps to enter the hospital in my scrubs, mask on, shield in hand, I feel an overwhelming sense of pride. When I leave at 11 driving down an empty highway, alone with my thoughts, I feel that I have in some small way contributed to a greater cause.

I came home last night to find this note from my sweet friend Mary Ellen. She is a kind and giving person and maybe, just maybe, because she is from a military family she also gets it, gets that this is a "battle" and we all need to do our parts. Her supportive words meant so much.

Thanks for listening.

Stay home

Be safe

Stay well

